

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2159
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026

Pollution by thermal power plants

2159. SHRI MEDA RAGHUNADHA REDDY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has conducted any study regarding air pollution and environmental impact in urban and industrial areas located near thermal power plants;
- (b) whether cumulative environmental impact assessments have been conducted for clusters where thermal power plants operate along with other polluting industries such as refineries, chemical units and diesel-based facilities;
- (c) whether Government proposes stricter emission norms, continuous monitoring systems and public disclosure of emission data particularly for older units; and
- (d) whether any measures are proposed for environmental mitigation and health protection in highly polluted industrial clusters?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d): As per the Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2006, all new projects or activities listed in the Schedule to the notification as well as the Expansion, modernisation or any change in the product mix or raw material mix in existing projects or activities, listed in the Schedule to the notification, resulting in capacity beyond the threshold limits specified for the concerned sector in the schedule are required to obtain prior Environmental Clearance (EC). Accordingly, the Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) mentioned at item no 1 (d) of the Schedule to the EIA, Notification, 2006, require prior EC. The process of grant of EC for any project/activity, inter alia, involves preparation of a comprehensive Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report addressing all the environmental concerns related to the project including impact on ambient air quality, water environment and waste generation. The EIA report is rigorously appraised by the Expert Appraisal Committee comprising domain experts and appropriate environmental safeguards are prescribed to mitigate the impact of various environmental concerns related to the project while granting the EC.

State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs), through Consent mechanism under the Water Act, 1974 and the Air Act, 1981, monitor the establishment and operation of industries as well as polluting activities through prescription of pollution control measures and

monitoring the compliance of environmental standards. Inspections are carried out to assess the adequacy and performance of treatment facilities and to verify compliance with the discharge conditions stipulated in the Consent to Operate (CTO) issued by the respective SPCBs/PCCs.

Further, as per the report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) committee constituted to examine the studies/reports of CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), various reports and publications on Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) including studies on health impact, if any, and database on emissions from TPPs and its impact on the ambient air quality, the Ambient Air Quality levels are within the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) across most of the regions of the country.

In order to strengthen self-regulation, 17 category of highly polluting industries which includes TPPs, are mandated to install Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS), for real-time monitoring and alert system with connectivity to the server of SPCBs/PCCs and CPCB. The OCEMS data is available in public domain on CPCB website <https://cems.cpcb.gov.in/>. The Ministry, vide notification dated 11.07.2025, has notified the norms for applicability of SO₂ emission standards along with the timelines for different categories of TPPs.

Further, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), under National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCH), issued a Guidance note in November, 2025 on 'Provision of services for Air Pollution-Related Illnesses through Chest Clinic' and it specifies for establishment of Chest Clinic at District hospitals, and Medical Colleges in identified areas.
